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ABSTRACT

A national model for the training of principals as instructional leaders: the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy is described. The paper includes a statement of vision, an explanation of how the program is operated, a description of the instructional methods employed, and a list of the warranties issued to graduates of the academy. Three other alternative programs are briefly described: (1) Danforth Program for the Preparation of School Principals; (2) Performance-Based Preparation Program of Principals, and (3) Leaders Preparation Program at Brigham Young University (Utah). Appended are six references. (SI)

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GROWING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE: AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERS

A Paper Presented at the
International Conference on Educational Leadership
at Cologne, Germany
June 27-July 1, 1989

by

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Introduction

The many educational studies of the past five years made it clear, that if our schools are to grow toward excellence, we must improve the preparation of our school leaders. Boyer wrote: "Rebuilding excellence in education means reaffirming the importance of the local school and freeing leadership to lead."

In order to improve school leaders the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in its 1983 report on secondary education called for the establishment of academies for principals.

Only two years after the publication of this report, the Indiana General Assembly responding to this recommendation and other calls for strengthening administrative training passed legislation establishing the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy (IPLA). The Academy was established to strengthen the instructional leadership skills of practicing principals.

In the summer of 1985, over seventy individuals representing elementary, middle, and high schools, colleges and universities, business leaders, superintendents and parents met to create a vision for the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy (IPLA). From this group came the following Vision Statement:

> "The I.P.L.A. is a national model for the training of principals as leaders of instructors. Through Academy experiences and educational challenges, these leaders are empowered with effective behaviors and proficiencies. Graduates of the I.P.L.A. set the pace for state-wide educational improvements and reform and are recognized as

exemplary educational leaders in Indiana and throughout the country."

The IPLA Program

The IPLA which is operated through the Indiana Department of Education, is an innovative, experience-centered, two-year in-service educational program consisting of four phases of educational development. The first phase involves the participants in the development of leadership skills. An understanding of school climate and culture is provided in the second phase. The third phase includes an analysis of school programs leading to models of school improvement. The final phase that each class progresses through is communication, which includes a review of ninety communication process skills. (See Appendix A)

In addition to the four phases of educational development, the academy's principals must progress through four transitional phases of experiential activities. These transitional phases include: (1) Mentoring - a collaborative process by which one principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of another less experienced principal; (2) Business/Industry-Educational Exchanges - The Principal's Academy will use facilitators and presenters from business and industry, and in turn business and industry will be able to send representatives to the academy; (3) Resource Linkage - IPLA in order to reach a vision of the best that can be imagined for schools will provide a linkage to schools of both human and material resources; (4) Regional Seminars - One day events where principals will be able to interact with presenters/experts on various educational concerns and be able to transfer learned strategies back to their own schools.

Principals are expected to demonstrate proficiency in all four phases of educational development at the following levels: Level One - Acquire new information and knowledge; Level Two - Identify, understand, and conceptualize the implications of the new information; Level Three - Develop skills to relate new information and concepts to the altering of old practices; and Level Four - Demonstrate a satisfactory degree of proficiency through simulation and field experience.

The major thrust of the IPLA is to develop principals into proactive change agents who become effective leaders. The academy defines an effective leader as one who:

- empowers people through development of collegiality
- champions and role models effective change
- achieves shared objectives through increased efficacy
- influences and directs people within the organization
- thinks in visionary terms
- leads self and others in determining "what's important here."

The IPLA has identified and articulated a number of principles upon which the academy program is based. They call them Principles for Principals:

People improve before programs improve.

Behavior change precedes attitude change.

Excellence is a journey...not a place.

The more power you give...the more you get.

Learning is a lifelong process.

Process is more important than content.

There is strength in diversity.

Ideas must have champions...or they die.

Without emotion...learning won't last.

Leadership is situational.

Treat people as if they are special.

Learn to work smarter...not harder.

Failure is a choice.

Choose struggles that are worth your effort.

Academy sessions are held in the months of February, April, September, and November. Principals attend eighteen session days over a two-year period with one day devoted to Orientation, four days to Leadership, four days to School Culture, four days to School Programs, four days to Communications, and one day for Graduation.

A new group of fifty principals enters the Academy each quarter. Thus far, 150 principals have graduated from the academy, and another 300 are currently enrolled.

Instructional Methodology

Instruction at the Academy is carried out by expert educational/business leaders and by peer facilitators, who are current public school administrators who have been identified as effective instructional leaders in their schools or school districts.

A variety of instructional methods are used including: team teaching, collegial support teams, models of excellence, reading, lecture, self-directed contracts, in-basket activities, case studies, role playing, simulation, field-based experience, and other techniques.

Each IPLA session follows the Effective In-Service Model:

- Human Development Activity

- Small Group Interaction
- Content
- Humor
- Evaluation
- Celebration
- Individual Growth

In selecting the fifty candidates for each Academy class, preference is given to principals with three years or more of administrative experience. In addition to administrative experience, balance is sought among elementary, middle, and high school principals, geographic location, rural-suburban-urban mix, and male-female representation.

Warranties

Upon completion of the two-year in-service training program of the Indiana Principal's Leadership Academy, the following warranties are issued to graduates. You will be:

- an instructional leader as well as an efficient manager
- a team player with strengthened communication and leadership skills
- a role model of personal and professional improvement
- a key change agent in the improvement of school environment curriculum, and instruction

In 1987 the Indiana General Assembly enacted into law the largest educational reform package in the state's history. Called the A Plus Program, its 24 initiatives were meant to prepare Indiana school children for vastly different working conditions, a truly global society and the far tougher competition it will bring.

Some of the elements of the program are: Statewide achievement testing ... Required remediation for pupils falling behind ... Cash rewards for schools with improved performance ... Performance-based accreditation ... A longer school year ... Programs for at-risk pupils and continuation of the Principals Leadership Academy started in 1986.

Other Approaches to Principal Preparation

Effective schools research studies consistently points out the need for strong school leaders. A number of alternative programs to the traditional preparation of principals have been implemented across the U.S. Three such approaches are briefly described next.

The Danforth Program

The Danforth Program for the Preparation of School Principals is another example of an experiential approach. Staff members of the Danforth Foundation work with the faculty of four to six universities for 18 months helping the faculty to develop alternative programs for school principals. The program's emphasis is on experiential learnings through observation, self-paced study, and consultations with university faculty, community leaders, researchers, and practicing administrators.

In 1988, The University of Alabama, Cleveland State University, Georgia State University, and Ohio State University completed participation in the Danforth Program. At the present time, Indiana University, University of Houston, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Oklahoma, and University of Washington are developing principal preparation programs with Danforth.

Performance-Based Preparation

Performance-Based Preparation of Principals is another example of a program to improve principal preparation.

The NASSP University Consortium offers a number of suggestions in the development of performance-based programs. The Consortium suggests a review of five major program categories: program goals and objectives, admission requirements, diagnosis of learner knowledge and skills, design and delivery of instruction, and requirements for program completion and initial placement in entry-level professional roads. Universities in the NASSP Consortium for the Performance-Based Preparation of Principals are California State University at Fullerton, Loyola University of Chicago, Texas A & M University, University of Utah, and Western Michigan University.

The Leaders Preparation Program

The Leaders Preparation Program (LPP) is a cooperative effort of Brigham Young University and Utah school districts. It is a non-traditional program supported in part by a Leadership in Educational Administration (LEAD) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. A Modular curriculum built around ten core competencies make up the program. An internship and work with a mentor principal provide an experienced-based approach.

Conclusion

The U.S. Department of Education in a booklet entitled What Works stated, "Effective principals have a vision of what a good school is and systematically strive to bring that vision to life in their schools."

In order to prepare school leaders to become more effective, a number of alternative programs for the preparation of principals have been initiated.

This paper dealt with four such approaches, with an emphasis on the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy.

Development of Effective Leaders

2 Year Instructional Program:

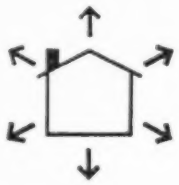
Classes are admitted to the Academy four times per year (September, November, February, April). Each class progresses through the following phases:

Phase I
Leadership Skills

- Self Awareness
- Teaching/Learning Styles
- Values
- Stress
- Time Management

Phase II
School Culture

- Effective School Research
- Process Skills
- Institutional Assessment/Auditing
- Staff Morale
- Classroom Management
- Staff Development



Phase III
School Programs

- School Improvement Models
- Supervision
- Evaluation

Phase IV
Communication

- Written/Oral Communication
- School/Community Relations
- School/Business/Community Partnerships
- Review 90 Process Skills

Expectations of Leaders:

- Attendance/Participation
- Goal-Action Plans
- Mentoring
- Principal Exchanges
- Climate Audit
- Business/Community/School Partnerships
- Networking/Collegiality
- Graduation

Selection of Leaders:

Each class is limited to fifty participants. The Academy keeps in mind the following, when selecting the members:

- K-12 representation
- rural, suburban, urban
- geographic location
- male/female

Ancillary Services:

In addition, I.P.L.A. sponsors on-going publications, brochures, and "Special Editions" of outstanding educators, individualized and personalized inservice to principals, internships and visitation exchanges, mentoring, mini-grants to principals, resource and technical support.

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